AT THE PISTOL'S POIL

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

While Dr. Arnold Stagg, of New York, is visiting his cousin, James Stagg, of Utica, district attorney of Oneida county, for the purpose of regaining his health, he spends his days riding about the county. One day he rode out to a descreted mill and little church on a neglected highway, where he is just in time to witness the meeting of a rough looking man and handsome young woman, evidently about to elope. Four horsemen ride up. Dr. Stagg warns the couple, the man escapes, and the woman swoons in his arms. The horsemen are John and James Lee, the latter's son and a hired man. The girl is a niece of the Lees, Beatrice Forrest. The Lees believe she was attempting to elope with Stagg, and they force him to marry her at the pistol's point and then go their way, while the girl also rides away. Dr. Stagg tells his strange story to his cousin, who in turn tells him that the girl's father was accused of murdering Jake Brand and robbing him of a large sum of money. James Stagg is in the midst of his strange story of the murder which Robert Forrest, father of the young wife so rudely forced upon Dr. Stagg a few hours before, is accused.

CHAPTER IV-Continued.

"He swore that he had taken enough in his pocket to pay the money, but Brand inviting him to ride to Utica, he thought he would go and draw some more money, as he intended to use some the next day in purchasing a small place on the Clifton Road for him and Beatrice to make their home in. He swore, also, that he left Brand, not where Lee and Enland asserted, but at the road which led to Shade-He said he did not pass it, but Brand stopped the horse at the road, he stepped from the wagon, and went

'Now, that was all the defense he We made mincemeat of it with the two eyewitnesses. Another thing against Forrest was that Jake Brand was never known, in the whole course of his life, to do a philanthropic act. He had never lent anybody any money for any purpose, except, of course, in the way of business on good security. or as an investment on bond and mortgage. But such an act as Forrest chimed was entirely foreign to Brand's

found to show that Brand made the Of course, Forrest had nothing to produce, and Brand's executors could no paper. If Forrest had claimed that he had received back from Brand his note and had destroyed it, that would have had some weight. Had he shown a receipt he would have proven that part of his case, but that would not have freed him from the murder.

"But what Forrest did claim was pre posterous. He claimed that when Brand loaned him the money he had signed an acknowledgment of the debt, which Brand had kept. But when he paid the money Brand had mislaid the acknowledgment, and said let it go for a day or two and he would look it uv. It wasn't Brand's way of doing business. and would not wash with the court, The paper was never found.

"Forrest was convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to life imprisonment. He is serving that sentence at Auburn now." So this was the story of Bob Forrest.

This explained why Beatrice hated

But it did not explain a good many James Stagg's cousin.

I could not think clearly.

"Stoutly. She evidently loved him, and he did her. It was the bitterest part to him that he was forever degrading remained that until the law, at her re-

notwithstanding that your witnesses

eyewitness Well, I suppose it amounts to that: yes. But, you see, there were discrepancies in Forrest's testimony. He claimed that he left the wagon at the road to Shadelands, while Lee and Enland swore that he went a quarter of a

ing with James Lee." "Then, the money was never found?"

"No. Forrest had a snug sum in the bank, which he had deposited on the day of his arrival. I suppose it is there yet John Lee was made guardian of he will take care of it for her.' with her."

"Still she has legal rights. If he does not do the right thing she can apply for an accounting and have a new guardian appointed."

omehow that beautiful, white, tearstained face, so full of anguish, came

woman apply for a guardian?"

"Why-I suppose so; but, as a rule, a married woman, whether a minor or not, is supposed to have a husband who will protect her interest." "Just so," I said, puffing harder on my

But she will not be a married woman

against her, to whom could she apply

She would, I know, marry that other

I did not know how much money Beatrice had. I did not care. But the girl had seemed so helpless, so absoat the mercy of the more powerful that I shuddered when I thought

what would probably be her end. We had talked all night. dawn was coming in through the library windows. James stretched himself,

full of curiosity, followed him.

I saw him take a telegram from a essenger. He stepped back to the library, opened and read the dispatch. Then his face turned the color of chalk. He looked at me with a vacant stare. senses had taken permanent

CHAPTER V.

leave of absence.

In Which I Carry Things With a High Hand.

"Well, what the devil ails you?" I demanded, noting my cousin's dazed an. "Anything the matter with Em the children?" "No!" he answered in a hoarse whis-

per. "Robert Forrest has escaped from Auburn Prison. Been gone since early yesterday morning."

I sank into a chair and feebly held out my hand for the dispatch.

Reading the brief telegram that had een sent to James did not at first re-leve me or add to my knowledge. I sat

there in a stupor, while James walked up and down the room, now more agitated than ever. "I cannot understand it!" he said. "An brecked escape from Auburn! I thought it im-

possible. But the man will be retaken. He cannot get very far away." It was evident that the thought which was searing its way into my brain had

his agitation and slept soundly. There was no sleep for me. The morning sun

I undressed and lay down on my bed, My brain seemed to be on fire.

rice had cried out to the man at the window that I was a cousin of James Stagg. It explained why she had cast aside all letters but one, and had taken the one making the appointment for the meeting at the church.

ot been alarmed at the presence of the bay. He had expected the girl to ride the church, and no doubt supposed the horse was hers.

I left my bed and paced up and down the room. I could hear the servants beginning to stir. A new day was break-ing into life. What would it bring?

My bra was like a mill, grinding out thoughts, and after they had been turned over and over, casting them forth to make room for new ones, I was conscious that I was not thinking with my usual good judgment or skill.

I was in a whirl, a tumult of excitement, that dulled my senses in some respects, while it rendered me acute in

In all, through all, and above all, I saw that tear stained and beautiful face. It was clear to me now that the Leez had been utterly mistaken in their ac sation against the gifl they had married to me at the pistol's point.

The fact was patent that Beatrice had away with her father.

The more I studied the thing, the more

onvinced I became. But this view of prisoner, the case brought new emotions, new doubts and fears.

man in the church window that I was she was innocent of all connection with any other man, innocent of any clandescould not think clearly.

or motive, actuated only by her love for Lees are liars. I don't know this Ellis "Did Beatrice maintain her father's her father, and her undying belief in his England, but I'll find him." innocence, what, then, became my duty?

quest or mine, set her free, she was my

a distance that they could not see the James, I knew, was a strong advocate blow struck. Brand was not shot o for his side of any case. I had read had read stabbed. He was killed by a blow a much of his work before courts and juries, and knew that his summing up speeches usually carried conviction.

procedure was all for the success of Forrest? I sat down by the open window and let the June

cheeks. I tried to think clearly; to study out my proper course.

I hated the Lees with a hatred as violent as it had been sudden in its birth. That the parson was honest in his convictions, I did not doubt.

punishment. felt a great sympathy. Perhaps, the into your life in this way?" memory of the pure, white tear stained

for Beatrice.

She was my wife. I had promised "Well you and no "Well you are "Wel of my problem. set her free from a bond that must

of distress and adversity; if she was to dom that no doubt she will crave. There of the law; if she had, in her firm be- remain my wife. But while she needs the help of his son-in-law, will remain from all protection, what, then, was my Arnold Stagg, your humble servant."

of course, if both escaped, reached a it not the money that was serving as a far country, and began life anew, Beathink you are a damned fool." trice would be sheltered in her father's

But James was confident that Forrest deter me. I shall adhere to my resoluwould be captured. When, then, of Bea- tion

house. She could not claim the protec-not at all certain that she is not now My back was toward the open window. The early tion of those who ought to stand by

"Well," he said, "we have had a most exciting night. I wonder what Thorn-adrift on a world where her youth and reasoning. It seems certain to me that beauty would prove a snare and her ul-

tomorrow I will present your case before Judge Morgan and have the marriage annulled."

These things swept through my brain like searing irons. Perhaps I was about to take a step from the room when there came a peal at the bell. None of the servants was up.

These things swept through my brain like searing irons. Perhaps I was quixotic. Perhaps my youth had taken the reins and thrown judgment to the winds. But be that as it may, as I sat there, growing calmer under muc Church last night."

A Predicament and a Mystery.

I gave a shout to alarm the house hold, and knelt at the parson's side. The bullet from the assassin's pistol had struck a glancing blow, but had played

I, the influence of the balmy morning

born within me that moment. ny wife!"

My wife! Even as I spoke the words of Parson Lee." a thrill shot through me. That pretty creature my wife! Only till she was was safe. Only till the tangled web of the romance and tragedy had been be straightened. Then I would set her

I had sat several hours over the prob lem. It was no hasty conclusion. If it seems rash and untenable to the reader, Se the logical outcome of the affair.

I went downstairs. James was ahead doing right.

"Well, I don't wonder at it. Any man, But we will settle all that today. Mig-

gles, let us have breakfast," fast appeared. "Yes," continued James, "I shall go

court has opened. It will not take long muc Mills and my adventure. I rode to set you free." "I wish, James," I said, striving to

now. "Eh! Do nothing? I don't understand. What do you mean?'

the thing a little. I am not quite sure ther south, leading perhaps to Sauthat I want to be released just now." I don't think James showed as much

"Say that again," he remarked, with

fancy."

"Well, there is no beafing around the bush necessary," I answered. "I've spent hours thinking about the matter shaded by a row of large trees, and also gin I am not entirely convinced that shut it in like a wall. Robert Forrest had a square deal at his trial. I---

"You what! You don't think—come small, snug library sat the parson at to prison for life, I trust."

"No. not at all. But all prosecuting officers, whether they are in Oneida county, New York city, London, or Paris, anda from the library. The fact was patent that Beatrice had are usually excessively zealous. A crime to eloped with a lover. She had run is committed. A prisoner is found. Every scrap of evidence discovered by the fear. police is twisted and warped to fit that

"The law must be vindicated. A victim must be found. The district attor-The girl was very young. Admitting ney has his reputation to make. The police are on their mettle. The testimony of witnesses, so long as it tends their way, is not sifted for truth. I The whole thing confused me so that time love, free from any impure thought goes. Between you and me, I think the I said.

Heavens! Am I hearing aright? Do you intend to reopen the case?" "To a certain extent I do. My heart

goes out in sympathy to Beatrice For-"But if the two witnesses saw the murder and robbery, how did Forrest escape execution? Why was the verdict not murder in the first degree?"

"Because the witnesses were at such "Extended the floor in my perturbation. If her father is innocent, it should be shown, if for no other reason than to remove the misery and stain from her life. If he is guilty, then, more the meaning one.

The parson wriggled in his chair. "Extended the floor in my perturbation one."

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The parson wriggled in his chair. "Extended the floor in my perturbation one."

The parson wriggled in his chair. "Extended the floor in my perturb rest-now Beatrice Stagg-in her lonely honorable man.

"Suppose your detectives find him as know." they probably will. Suppose he is taken back to Auburn? What becomes of her? to make the best of it. Come, I want is no horse there. Her uncle's house is closed against her. She has committed the heinous crime of his case. Had he been fair with Robert believing in her rather a limit there is no house for her to find shelter believing in her father's innocence. Yet ter in. No friend to offer protection.

fan my fevered know. What will become of her if she is left to the tender mercies of this kindand so do I. You know the fate of a pretty country girl who is thrust out from the shelter that should be hers. But James-the young man who had Who takes her up? Your Thomas Firnt his cousin's father to prison on his fin? Your man about town? First the

disgust. I firmly believed in capital with a great career before you. Are you and the date. He signed as the officiatgoing to cast it aside because the ing clergyman. Then he smeared the But with the man convicted wrongly daughter of a murderer has been thrown back of the acknowledgment with muci- Hartford, where the loungers in the

"No, I don't intend to cast aside my face warp my judgment. If so, I of- future, nor do I intend to do anything portant portion. fer no excuse. There are times when inconsistent with good, hard sense. But the strongest of us give way to senti- this girl has, through the mysterious ask what your purpose is?" I knew one thing-I felt sorry workings of Providence, been sent like a flash into my life. I am not going to tect a young girl whose relatives have But being sorry was not the solution shirk the responsibility. You admit, do cast her off. There is no need wasting

But how? If she had gone with her my young wife from the cold jeers and lover, but her father, who had escaped father; if all her relatives and friends had turned against her; if that pure young girl, ignorant of the world, was "When I have seen her safe from ggirl, ignorant of the world, was buffeted by the storms and waves harm, then I shall offer her the free- His eyes betokened terror. hounded over the land by the sleuths is no reason why she should wish to

"Perhaps I am. But I can afford to
e one if I feel like it. You cannot
I shall adhere to my resoluI s

"And find the girl you have canon on the way to New York with her lover her in any trouble. To whom should she turn? What would be her fate?

If Forrest was captured and returned

"You don't seem as bright as a seem as a as a "You don't seem as bright as usual,

there was no lover in the case. I think

find her when they find Forrest. The colored woman came in, screamed with some one shot the parson. I thought terror, and fell down, banging the floor be had committed suicide."

While I was still examining him a cate. I got it and was about to go when some one shot the parson. I thought terror, and fell down, banging the floor be had committed suicide."

James mopped his brow.

"The whole thing is making me old."

he had committed suicide." "Let them say what they will," I first thing for me to do is to call on Parmuttered half aloud, "I will stand by son Lee."

"I should think you had had enough

"There is just one more thing I want of him. I want a marriage certificate." James laughed, got up, and left the

I was not long behind him. I went to my room, put on my riding boots and But now she needed, if ever a girl jacket, and slipped a .32-caliber Smith & did need, a protecting arm. She needed Wesson revolver in my pocket, having the sheltering name of a man who was seen to it that the six chambers were I then had the bay saddled and started

Somehow a load had been lifted from it was far from that to me. It was my mind. Rash and unprecedented as the logical outcome of the affair. my resolve had been, I felt that I was

me, and in his well-groomed figure The bay was in good form and we the breakfast room, "you do lood There was no need for me to ask how gasped, trying to she brecked up. Has your sleep done you to find Parson Lee. I knew pretty well not shoot the man." o good?"
"I ve had no sleep," I answered, an i Church were situated. I don't think I throttling me with his powerful hands your own interest you had better keep my voice sounded strange even to mywill ever forget that. And I knew the around my throat and his thumbs on high chimney I had seen from the little my windpipe.

with the with his powerful hands on quiet. Anything you say now will be used against you at your trial. I must church belonging to Shadelands, John

Miggles responded, and soon the break- and in a spirit of wantonness, no doubt, I took my revolver and fired at it. "Yes," continued James, "I shall go I turned the bay into the grass coy-to see Judge Morgan as soon as his ored road that had first led me to Paw-

When I saw the chimneys of Shade appear at ease and unconcerned, "you would do nothing in that matter just now."

lands I saw, at the same time, a branch road that had escaped my observation before leading to Lee's place. It had been used, no doubt, when the mill was That do you mean?"

"I mean that I am going to look into Shadeiands was on another road, far-

gucket or Sauquoit. Shadelands was surrounded by a ston I don't think James showed as much astonishment the night before as he did then. He sat back in his chair and stared as if either he or I had turned the large house of John Lee some dismanler.

tance away, surrounded by great elms, spreading oaks, and beeches.

Nearer me, and deeper still in the a tremendous attempt to be calm, "Say that again. I don't quite catch on, I shade of a grove, was a white cottage

and I've reached a conclusion. To be- by some climbing vines that almost As I stepped upon the veranda, I

now, Arnold, you are not accusing me a table. At the farther side of the room of conspiring to send an innocent man an open door led to other parts of the The window reached to the floor, and

> I knocked on the sash. The parson looked up, and sprang to his feet in "You need not be alarmed," I said,

entering. "You know me, I suppose?" A greenish white color came into his "I know you, unfortunately," he said,

sinking back into his chair. "I warn you that there are servants in the "I have not come to steal anything," episode at the church last night. I have a surgeon in Utica.

ome for my marriage certificate.' The parson stared "But-you-you said you did not want

than ever, she needs the protection of an think berhaps we were—ahem—rather— James Lee gave me a curious look,

we are all liable to make mistakes, you and went after the bay. "Yes, you made one; but I am going

"Rut-but-we think it would be bat- taken him to escape."

Parson Lee. I pulled my revolver from play monkey with us." my pocket and aimed it at him. Now, sit perfectly still," I said. "Don't make a fuss. You married me at the police, to whom I could tell himself, or was shot by an enemy."

pistol's point last night. Turn about is my story, assured of finding reasonable. A strained look came into my countries the police, to whom I could tell himself, or was shot by an enemy." only fair plty. Now, I'll give you half and unimpassioned listeners. minute to write out an orthodox cer-

tificate. "But it would be worthless! There and held me. would be no witnesse

Paste the paper I signed on the certestimony as an eyewitness—could he have borne false testimony?

In the death in degradation."

In the death in degradation." I had no sympathy with felons. The mawkish sentiment that makes a hero of a murderer filled me always with syou? You are a young man of fortune, the name of Beatrice, my own name,

"There!" he said. "Take it. May I

"Yes," I said. "My purpose is to pro "Well, yes and no. The marriage will lover that you thought me. It would Street to the police headquarters. The am the prosecuting attorney for the her, when under the impression that she was going away with her lover, to an annulment." lover that you that there was no lover in the case. The "Just so. And if neither party asks man she went to meet-I will tell you stairs into the presence of the chief. seem hateful to her. I meant to keep for it, then mine is the power, the this to give you something to chew on

from Auburn prison.' The parson seemed to shrink to half

"Bob-Bob Forrest free!" he gasped. "Yes," I said. "And Bob Forrest, with for a guardian who would protect her lief in her father's innocence, cut loose a protector, she shall have one in free if he is innocent of the crime that your son fastened on him. You made "Do you know what I think? Pardon me an enemy, Lee. I warned you that blood." mind. I I'd hurt some of you. I am a man who goes to the bottom of things.'

> entered by a window. I turned toward clope. We pursued and caught them at desert me, well and good. I will get She could not return to her uncle's ized into sainthood an idol of clay. It is I had even stepped beyond its lintel, the door on the other side of the room. Suddenly, I heard a shout from the the man and wife then and there. I parson, and a pistol shot.
>
> I turned quickly. The parson was lying near the window, on the floor, bleeding from a pistol wound in his head.

"Who saw him do it?" For a moment no one spoke. Then Fitzgerald gathered courage to say his

CHAPTER VI.

with her heels in a frenzy of hysteria. A man soon followed, and at a glance recognized him as the fellow called

Fitzgerald who had assisted the Lees at the church. "What's the patter?" he asked. "The parson has been shot," I an-

Fitzgerald looked at me quickly and eenly. I suppose he recognized my voice. The suit I had on, boots and all,

was the same as I had worn the previous day "Oh, it's you!" he exclaimed. "Oh!

Oh! He rushed to the door and let out bawl for help. Then, paying no heed whatever to the parson's condition or needs, he hurled himself upon me and

It seemed an age, but was not probafinding himself dragged into an entanglement of this kind, would lose sleep. Lee's place. And the parson lived in a glement of this kind, would lose sleep. cottage somewhere on the estate. I was wonderfully light-hearted as i not feet was heard, and John Lee came in, followed by his nephew James and two others. two other men from the farm.

"What's this? Murder!" cried John.
"Who is that, Fitzgerald?" "It is the fellow that was married to Miss Beatrice yesterday," was Fitzgerald's answer.

"Ah!" John Lee's face became purple again. He was a most excitable man, evidently, tor now. But I really believe a mistake

believed him to be dead. In fact, the statement." man did look like a corpse, with a "He'll nev chalky pallor on his thin face.

to his men. "He must not escape." "I've got him, all right," answered and Stagg." Fitzgerald.

thing," said James Lee. "Search him, difficult position.

had enough reason left to wish to avoid

on't let him get aaway." "I don't want to get away," I said. T'll go to the police station with you came here for my marriage certificate. got it, and was—" Shut up!" said James, giving me a ck. "We'll soon settle your hash."

ano of explosive action. Yet, with all his purple rage, he knew what he was He brought cords and bound my wrists together. He ordered one of his men to harness a team to a wagon. He rushed to a telephone in his own house,

John Lee seemed to be a perfect vol-

In a few minutes we were in a wagon ur way to Utica.

"Let me ask this much." I said, before we started. "I came here on a bay "I have changed my mind. I do want horse, which is the property of my there is to tell." cousin, James Stagg, of Utica. He is now eating grass beyond your stone said, struck by his manner.

He soon returned, shaking his head. "You are a fine liar," he said, "There

I knew there was no use in arguing with these men. I was in a hurry to

John Lee drove the horses, while distinctly nervous. James and Fitzgerald sat by my side

As we tore along toward New Hartple of Utica driving out in their car-Some of them knew me and obeyed. He drew from a drawer a blank looked with amazement as I was whisk- Can't you-can't you make it out to be certificate. He filled in the spaces with ed past them, held by two men, the self-defense?" cords that bound my wrists being in We raced through the village of New

we met the surgeon going as fast as we met the surgeon going as last as his horse could carry him toward Shadelands. John Lee shouted a few sorry. My God, I am sorry."

words to him, and we went on down "Well, if you believe I shot Lee, you Genesee Street

It did not take long to reach the city hall, and here we turned down Cooper dozen came to help hustle me up the people

The chief of police of Utica was oungish man, tall, without any superfluous flesh and with a keen, far-s He was as cool as though these tragedies came under his jurisdiction every day. I sat down, and the chief, after placing two officers in charge of the eyewitnesses did not say that Forme, told the Lees to make their state- rest struck Brand. It was all circum-

"All there is to say," said John Lee "is that this man came to my brother's cottage and shot him down in cold "Do you know the man?"

"Me think he is a fellow who has been hanging round lately under the name of than ever determined to go to the bot-Thomas Firfin. Last night my niece, the tom of this matter of Forrest's as soon daughter of Bob Forrest, met him to another lawyer." was along, and in order to save the girl as much shame as possible, suppose he shot my brother in revenge."

loping off. "They must have been alone," he said. "I heard the shot and then a shout. I stop him," ran to the library of the parson's cot-

I gave a shout to alarm the household, and knelt at the parson's side. The
bullet from the assassin's pistol had
struck a glancing blow, but had played

tage and saw the parson lying on the
floor with a bullet wound in his head,
and this man kneeling by him."

The chief of police does not agree
that your guilt is certain. He is a kind
of Sherlock Holmes in his way. I don't

"But I found this in his pocket," said would not have happened.

'that I fired that shot at a crow on my

way to Lee's house." lock you up, of course. What lawyer

do you wish to see?" "James Stagg of Genessee Street" "James Stagg! Why, he is the proscuting attorney for the county. "I know that. He is also my coustn.

my name is Arnold Stagg." 'Are you the cousin who has been visiting him?"

At this the chief mused a little, "Well, Lee," he said, "of course the case looks rather black against the docand was now in the same kind of a blue has been made. We must not be too fury he had been in when he followed sure. Everything depends on the find ing of the bullet, and whether William We are wanted at Lee's at once." He stopped to look at his brother, and returns to consciousness to make a

"He'll never return," said John. "Oh, I don't know. If it can be done

"Let me up," I gasped. "I did not hoot the parson."

I had expected to be set at liberty at once. But as the Lees and Fitzgerald filed out, and I was conducted to a cell, "I he chief ordered a carriage, and we "You! Oh, no! you never do any- I began to see that I was indeed in a three set out.

farm hands held me, James Lee went through my pockets.

"You did not—oh, I'll kill you!" he would have been some chance to talk.

"You did not—oh, I'll kill you!" he would have been some chance to talk.

"You did not—oh, I'll kill you!" he would have been some chance to talk. "You did not-oh, I'll kill you!" he ried, holding up my Smith & Wesson.
"Don't do it, James!" said John, who

> an expert on gunshot wounds. He has enable excitement, as was natural, extracted the bullet. It proves to be a .32-caliber, for a Smith & Wessen. I am er house. Both places were run by serafraid you are in a pretty deep hole." afraid you are in a pretty deep hole. I was stunned by this piece of information. I did not reply. There was no

e in any way convincing. But by degrees I became more calm. I realized I had a desperate fight on my ands, a fight for my life.

came in. His face was white and drawn. "You recall, no doubt, the little so I heard him tell James, and notified He was accompanied to the cell by the e at the church last night. I have a surgeon in Utica. sympathy of this official.

> knew that I intended to go to Lee's to get a marriage certificate. Well, I went I rode the bay. On the way over field I shot at a crow just for fun. I did not hit it, or that would help me now. Well, wish at first to give me the certificate

compelled him to give me one. window when the shot was fired. I saw no one. Lee either committed the act

A strained look came into my cousin's

sons in Utica."

"But one chamber of yours was fired. "Good God!" I cried, jumping to my feet, "do you actually believe that I shot Lee?" "I can't see anything else to believe,

don't want to defend me," I said. He looked at me sadly. "Don't you understand," he said, "I proved to be the constable from New

"Oh, and you will convict me, as you convicted Forrest, on circumstantial evidence.

county. I must take up the case for the

But he wasn't. The testimony of stantial, the same as this is. The sweat was pouring down my cous- James did not seem able really to lool

Can't you make it self-defense? Did not the parson attack you?"
"No! The parson did not attack me." "Certainly not. While those fools were

"I wish I could believe you, Arnold.

"Oh, then there is a doubt of my

"The bullet," I said, "is embedded in the skull, between the inner and outer crusts,"

"The bullet," I said, "is embedded in the skull, between the inner and outer his corridor. Some time during the night they both lit out. Forrest's cell "Gad! What a cool scoundrel!!" ex- was at the end of the tier. A gate claimed John Lee. "He examines his opened into a small court, from which victims."

> traced west from Auburn. The guard is believed to have come this way, but of She must have gone with a lover I shook my head.
> "I don't believe it," I said. "Beatrice

not occurred to my astute cousin. Soon after that we went to bed. James, with his usual strength of will, threw off

but my eyes would not close in sleep. The telegram to James explained things harshly. It explained why Beat-

I understood then why the man had

other things. It did not explain how James was the cause of her eloping. It did not explain that terrified cry to the that which now seemed certain, that

"Then, as a matter of fact, he as convicted on circumstantial evidence, knew, further, that his zeal in a criminal

mile past it." "Who was this Enland?" "A young man from Syracuse, stay-

atrice, and as he is rich, I dare say "Not now," I said, "he is so enraged

"James," I asked, "could a married

tomorrow. I will have the marriage annulled." A wave of unrest swept over me. I pictured that shrinking, delicate girl, left alone to buffet this cold, unfeeling world. If the rich John Lee turned h

yawned, and rose to his feet.
"Well," he said, "we have had a most to ton would say to your rest. But go to bed now. We'll get a little sleep, and timate ruin?

tomorrow I will present your case be-

"Tell him what you like," I said. "I around the skull of the parson, be- true," I put in. "All that these men know what his theory is. Anyway, he the influence of the balmy morning breeze, a great resolve grew strong within me.

I got up from my chair. I began putting on my clothing. I felt that my face betrayed the strength of purpose the balmy morning amond the skull of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. I amond the skull of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. I amond the skull of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions is true, with two exceptions. I am not the man known as Thomas probably die unless quick and skillful probably die unless quick and skillful fifth, and I did not shoot William Lee. I went there to get a marriage certificate. I went there is the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. It went the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. It was strong the control of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. It was strong the control of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. It was strong the control of the parson, between the outer and inner shells. The have said is true, with two exceptions. It was said is true, with two exceptions. It was said is true, with two exceptions. It was said is true, with two ex

"We must wait for news from the surlaundry and jump to the ground outside
the prison inclosure. Of course, escape
would have been impossible without the
connivance of the guard."
"But I want to say." I put in again,
"Well, what matters it to me?" geon," said the chief.

there was no trace of excitement.

"Gad?" he exclaimed, as I entered through New Hartford at a lively clip.

There was no need for me to ask how gasped, trying to shake him off. gasped, trying to shake him off. "I did his way after a marriage certificate, to guard. take time to shoot at a crow? It seems after all." strange. But I roust tell you that in

"I am.

"Bind the rascal well," said John Lee
Fulford will do it. We will keep the unbelieving. We may get you out of prisoner here till we hear from Fulford this after all.

That unfortunate shot at the crow While Fitzgerald and another of the had been the means of fastening sus- though the chief had got hold of the

doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William.

The doctor right away for poor William. doctor right away for poor William, and land this fellow in jail. Hold him he is at Rome on a criminal case. The report has come from Fulford. He is

> reply that came to my mind that could ford say. Late in the afternoon James Stagg

ympathy of this official.

He brought a chair inside and sat the chief. lown with a groan. "You are the chief of police." "Well," he said coldly, "tell me all "Do you know this man?" here is to tell."
"There is nothing much to tell," I my niece last night. I saw him in my "You h use this morning." "Is he the man who shot you?" "No."

I had some words with Lee, who did not "Then," I said, "the murderer has I threatened him with my revolver, and "Thuh! The murderer! I guess we "I had entered through an open winhad no patience to deal gently with know the murderer all right. You can't dow, but forgot this, and turned to go out through a door. My back was to the

> face. It was ashen in color. He was got the bullet by springing forward to prevent the man from shooting."
>
> If a thunderbolt had fallen inside the "The bullet fits your revolver," he "It is a common size. I suppose you effect. we passed several well-to-do peo- could find a hundred .32 Smith & Wes-

lage and stuck it on the certificate main street gazed at the well-known he said. "You know you said you hated where it would not obliterate any imheaded and blind to reason. I am afraid

> "Forrest was convicted on the testimony of evewitnesses. That is generally called direct evidence."

me squarely in the face. "I'd like to believe you, Arnold, but remember our conversation this morning. You hated the Lees." 'And I hate them now. I am more as I get out of my own trouble

"There is one thing that puzzles me," at that conclusion. I congratulate you he said. "The bay has not been found." It was most fortunate for you that the holding me down, the murderer was gal-

"But I found this in his pocket, said the James Lee, handing over my revolver.
"There is one cartridge fired."
"Much depends on this," said the Chief. "Smith & Wesson, thirty-two, Has the bullet been found?"

Has the bullet been found?"

Lorid. "Is embedded in compile, one of the night guards on compile.

"Simply this, that Forrest did not come in this direction. He has been

had too pure a face for an escapade of that kind. But I want to get out of this scrape. If you believe I am guilty, why, go ahead with your case, But I want a good lawyer.' "I'll see that you get the best to be ad. But I wish you could make it

self-defense." "Damn you and your self-defense. 1 did not shoot the man at all!" While this purposeless conversation was going on, there came a furious ringing of the telephone bell in the chief's office. A moment later the chief

"We will get at something now," he said, eagerly. "I have just received a message from Fulford. Lee has returned to consciousness, and can talk My cousin jumped to his feet. "Good! Everything depends on what Lee says. Come, Arnold. Forgive me.

"I am out of it now," I said, confi-'the drive to Shadelands was the longest I ever had. It did seem as

But at last we turned into the gate It was not the gate I had noticed The chief came to me, and I noted a where I had leaped the wall. It was west, cut off from the road to Clinton. We found the household in consid-

> liam a widower.
>
> The parson lay on a white bed in a cozy bedroom of his cottage. Over him stood a youngish surgeon, but a man in whose coolness and skill there was no doubt, even at a glance "Here they come," I heard Dr. Ful-

The wounded man turned on his pillow. His gray eyes lighted up strangely as they met mine. The chief advanced to the bedside with me.

"Are you sure?" "Quite sure." "Did you see the man who shot you?" "Yes.

stranger should shoot at you?"

The parson was getting weak. His eyelids dropped. He nerved himself for one more reply. "He did not shoot at me," he said weakly. "The shot was fired at this man, who claims his name is Stagg. 1

"I do not know. I don't think I ever

"Can you think of any reason why a

house, it could not have had a greater We were all stupefied with sur prise. I more than anyone else, Who had tried to take my life? And

why? CHAPTER VII. Following a Clue to a Finish.

The parson, having exhausted his strength in doing his duty, sank back on his pillow unconscious. Dr. Fulford, now concerned more with his patient than with the discovery of the would-be assessin, gently but imperatively motioned us from the room As we turned to go, I noticed a stranger standing by John Lee's side. This

John Lee took the leadership and we

filed out of the parson's room into

larger one down stairs, evidently the There was a very perceptible restrain upon all the members of the party. My ousin was distinctly ill at case. It is not an easy matter to resume friendly relations with one whom, a few minutes before, you have accused post

tively of attempting to commit murder

Hartford.

It was the Utica chief of police whe broke the ice. I felt toward him some thing of gratitude, remembering that he alone of all the crowd had doubted my guilt. He held out his hand and I took it "I congratulate you, doctor," he said "I could not believe that a man of you education and position could commit s brutal a crime. Even admitting the ex-

citing circumstances, there was some thing that withheld me from jumping at that conclusion. I congratulate you parson returned to consciousness. You olding me down, the murderer was galping off."

"But we have telegraphed all over to
did he do it?"

"And why
did he do it?" "I am utterly at a loss," I answered
"I think Lee is mistaken. I know of n
one who would have even an imaginar,
cause to shoot me."

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

tage and saw the parson lying on the